

# Anglers are finding pleasure in schools at Deer Creek

**By Ray Grass**  
Deseret News sports writer

1-29-87

**DEER CREEK RESERVOIR** — The graph printed it out on paper as a black cloud more than 100 yards long and 30 feet thick. Beneath the ice, and some 50 feet down, the cloud was a school of yellow perch . . . a small fish six to eight inches long and easily gripped, oh so carefully, in one hand.

It was impossible to tell just how many of the small perch it took to make up the cloud — a few hundred thousand, possibly — but it was a lot.

The school is, biologists say, one of many in the lake. A thousand, maybe. Deer Creek is a big lake and there are lots of perch there.

It is possible to go almost anywhere on the ice-coated lake, cut a hole, drop a line and, given time and the right bait, feel a tug or two. To hook a fish, now, is another matter. Nibbles come far more frequently than catches. Catching perch is easy, but not guaranteed.

It's a fact, though, that there are millions of perch in Deer Creek, along with some nice trout, bass and walleye, and that right now is the best time to fish for them.

Last Saturday, it was estimated there were about 700 fishermen on the ice at Deer Creek drilling holes and dropping lines. Catches of 30 to 40 fish were common, even in the most

crowded areas like Rainbow Bay . . . and this was considered a slow day. Some felt that a small front that passed through suppressed appetites. The weekend before, when the ice covering was only days old, fish hit on every drop of the bait. One angler reported that he and a friend caught "150 perch and a two-pound brown" in a couple of hours.

There's no question that right now the hottest ice fishing spot in the state is Deer Creek, and the primary target of fishermen there is the yellow perch.

The three main reasons are: One, perch are an easy fish to catch; two, there are so many there; and three, Utahns have finally discovered what others around the world have known for centuries — that the perch is one of the tastiest of fish.

The pan fish, which includes the perch, is the No. 1 fished-for fish in the world. Bass is No. 2 and trout a distant No. 3.

In Utah, this hasn't been the case. Up until a few years ago, the perch was an undesirable. It was recognized as a trash fish along with chubs and suckers.

Charlie Thompson, fisheries biologist in the Central Region of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, remembered signs at Deer Creek that read: "Don't Litter With Perch."

Thompson said a few years back the yellow

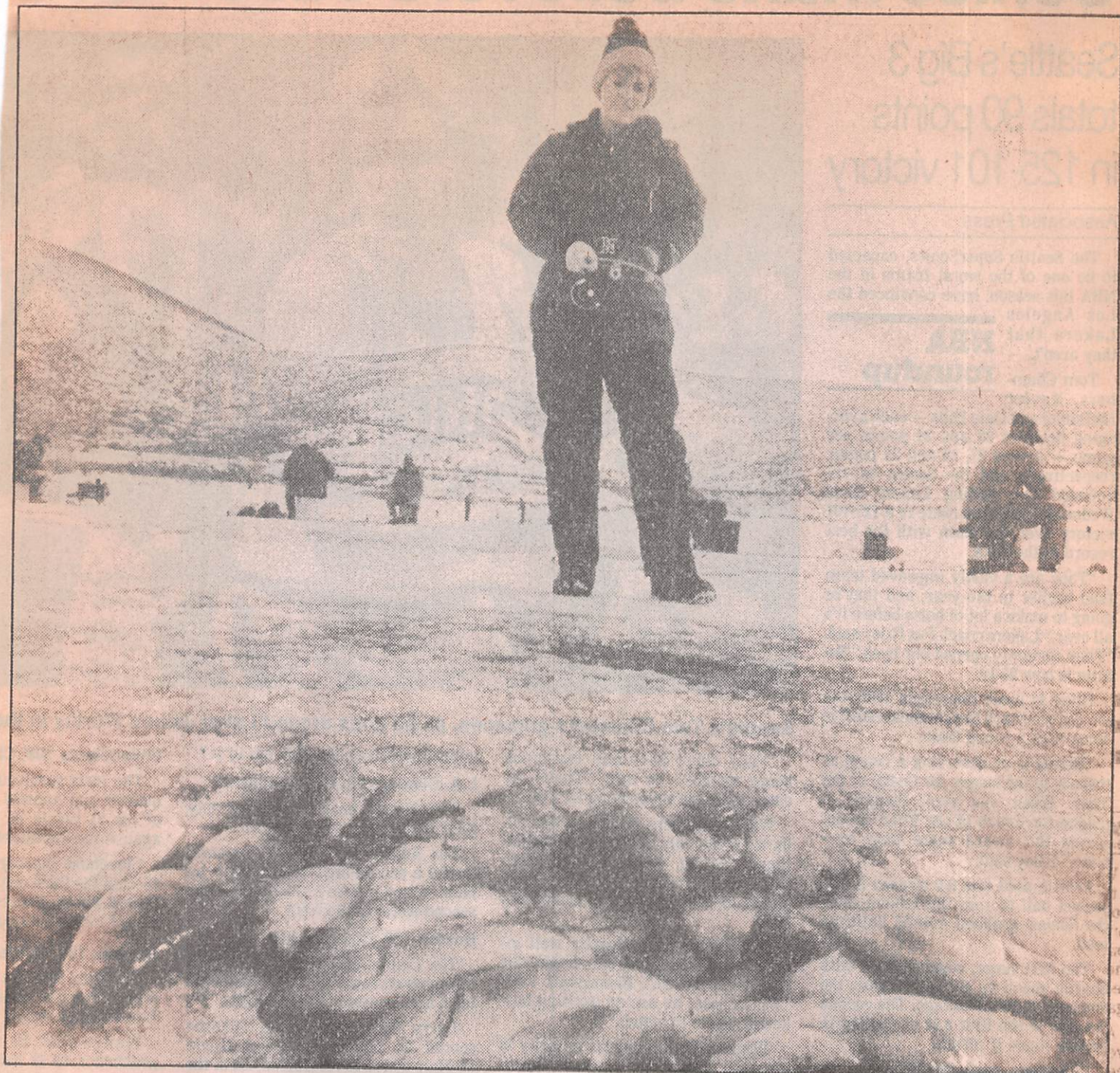


It doesn't take much rig to hook a perch, just light line and good touch.









PHOTOGRAPHY/ RAY GRASS

Fishing through the ice is good at Deer Creek Reservoir now, as this angler's catch indicates.

perch was finally elevated to the status of a Utah game fish, right up there with its neighbors, the trout, bass and walleye.

Even though the perch is now recognized as a game fish, it falls under different regulations. For one, there is no limit on perch. Fishermen can keep all they can catch. Also, parts of the perch can be used as bait. The most popular baits are a small piece of perch meat or a perch eye hooked on the end of a small ice fly or glo-hook.

Thompson admitted that he is surprised at the sudden popularity of perch fishing, and added, "I remember, in fact, that the only time we used to get 700 fishermen up here (Deer Creek) in one day was before year-round fishing and we had a season opener."

Thompson said the reason Deer Creek is so good is that, "Everything favors the perch there, the habitat, the water levels, the temperatures, everything."

The one exception, he said, is the walleye.

Perch and walleye make poor lake-mates. Experience has shown that as walleye numbers increase, perch numbers decrease, and vice versa.

"It may not happen for several years, but chances are the walleye will take over and there's not a lot we can do. Walleye are difficult to catch. Their numbers will go up until the perch are gone, then the walleye will drop

and the perch will come back," he noted.

This year the fishing has been excellent, but is expected to slow as winter wanes and the ice melts. Thompson said no one knows why it begins to slow, "maybe it has something to do with the spawn. Perch spawn right after the ice goes, and maybe they just stop feeding as it approaches."

Best fishing, of course, is the very day the ice becomes safe enough to stand on. That happened about two weeks ago.

It will continue to be good through February. On a good day, using the right bait and knowing how to set a hook, a fisherman will be able to fill a five-gallon bucket with perch. In fact, on a real good day it will take longer to fillet the fish than it will to catch them. Things will begin to slow in March, and usually by April the ice is gone and with it perch fishing.

As far as where to fish, there are several popular spots, including several of the coves and bays, with Rainbow Bay being one of the more popular. Last weekend, several hundred fishermen stretched from shore to shore across the bay.

The ice there is about eight inches thick, which means an ice auger or spade is necessary, especially since the ice holes can be no larger than 12 inches. It also means the ice is safe. Four inches of new ice is safe to fish on.

Another advantage to fishing for perch is

that any fishing tackle will do — from the least expensive children's outfits to the most expensive rods and reels.

Fishing line should be light. Four-pound test is recommended. Hits are light, and the lighter the line is more sensitive.

One of the most productive methods of fishing for perch is to attach a hook-less spoon, silver seems to be best, then tie on a small glo-hook or ice fly on about eight to 10 inches of leader.

The hook should be tipped with some type of bait. Fishermen usually start with a waxed worm or mealworm until they catch their first perch, then switch over to a piece of perch meat or perch eye.

The key is to fish off the bottom. Besides attracting the fish, the spoon also helps get the line to the bottom. Once the line stops falling, pull up enough line to get the bait suspended off the bottom, then wait. Occasionally, the line can be lifted or jigged a little, but slowly and not frequently.

Another secret is to be willing to move. If there are no takers within 15 to 20 minutes, move. Try going deeper or shallower, right or left, until the fish are located.

Best fishing has been in 35 to 45 feet of water.

Perch, remember, travel in schools . . . very large schools.





## Dam office in Heber City

3-11-87

HEBER CITY — The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has leased office space in Heber City as a headquarters for construction work on Jordanelle Dam.

Clifford I. Barrett, Upper Colorado Regional BOR Director, announced today that the bureau has leased temporary space from Sunn Classic Pictures at 325 W. 600 S., Heber City. The Jordanelle Field Office will house the resident engineer and staff that will administer the construction program.

Barrett said the resident engineer has not yet been selected, but should be named within the next 60 days.

The first of the employees to work in the facility should begin occupying the office by March 18. During the first phase of construction there will be about 15 employees at the office, he said.



# Deer Creek boater

## drowns Thursday

*Drowned 6-25-87*

**FATALITY — HEBER CITY —**  
A 60-year-old Grantsville man on a family outing apparently drowned at Deer Creek Reservoir Thursday night.

Wasatch County Sheriff Edd Thacker reported the victim, LeRoy Soelberg, had launched his boat at the Island Boat Camp and was taking it to join his family near Snow's Boat Camp in a nearby cove when he apparently had trouble with the boat possibly because of a problem with the plug. He had dived under water several times when onlookers noticed he didn't surface.

Sheriff Thacker said Steve Mills, Salt Lake City, waded out, found Soelberg in the water and pulled him to shore. He and Shauna Seely, Taylorsville, applied CPR but couldn't leave him to go for help. After about 25 minutes they were able to flag down a U.S. Forest Service ranger on the highway.

The three put Soelberg on the boat and continued CPR until they returned to the dock where they were met by an ambulance, the sheriff said.

Soelberg was taken to Wasatch County Hospital where he was later declared dead.

Sheriff Thacker said of Mills and Seely, "they did a super job, everything they did was commendable, they tried hard."

**ARREST —** A 43-year-old Orem man faces misdemeanor theft charges in Provo following allegations that he stole money while masquerading as a representative of the American Cancer Society.

### Police beat

According to a police spokesman, William Frank Sessions, 308 Imiton Way, allegedly represented himself as a volunteer for the cancer organization and went to different residences to pick up donation packets and then retrieved the cash for himself.

Police were tipped off to possible illegal activity when the packets containing checks were returned to the would-be donors.

**RECOVERED PROPERTY —**  
Provo Police on Thursday recovered a vehicle that had been stolen from an Orem location Saturday.

The 1969 red Chevrolet pickup was discovered by state hospital officials approximately 12:55 p.m. abandoned in a ditch in the property above the hospital. The truck was upside down. Orem officers were notified and managed to retrieve the vehicle after considerable difficulty.





# Despite Exceptional Rescue Efforts Grantsville Man Drowns At Deer Creek

A 60-year-old Grantsville man on a family outing died of apparent drowning at Deer Creek Reservoir last Thursday

evening. *2 July 1987*  
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launched his boat at the Island Boat Camp and was taking it to join his family near Snow's Boat Camp in a nearby cove when he apparently had trouble with the boat, possibly a problem with the plug. He dived under water several times when onlookers noticed he had been under too long.

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The three put Soelberg on a boat and continued CPR until they returned to the dock where they were met by an ambulance, the sheriff said. Soelberg was taken to Wasatch County Hospital where he was later pronounced dead.

Sheriff Thacker said of Mill and Seely, "They did a super job. Everything they did was commendable. They tried hard."



Rescuers rush a 60-year-old Grantsville man to Wasatch County Hospital. Despite exceptional rescue efforts, he was unable to be saved.





# Child dies as wind gust blows over truck

21 July 1987

**FATAL ACCIDENT — HEBER CITY** — A 7-year-old Heber City boy was killed last Saturday evening, near Wagstaff's Beach Resort on Deer Creek Reservoir, when a strong gust of wind tipped over the truck in which he was a passenger, according to Utah Highway Patrol Trooper Scott Hathcock.

Pronounced dead at Wasatch County Hospital was Curtis David Horner. Trooper Hathcock reported the boy and his 8-year-old brother, Jonathan Ray, were sharing the passenger seat of a semi-tractor driven by their father, Kenneth Ray Horner. The vehicle was north bound on highway 189 when the wind tipped it onto its side, the trooper said.

He said that after the accident Kenneth and Jonathan were discovered inside the cab but searchers couldn't find Curtis. A backhoe and

three wreckers were required to set the vehicle upright, at which time Curtis was discovered underneath the cab, the trooper reported.

He said the boy was apparently thrown through the windshield.

Kenneth and Jonathan were treated at Wasatch County Hospital for minor injuries and released.

Damages to the vehicle were estimated at about \$50,000.

**ACCIDENT** — A two-car, head-on collision three miles east of Eureka Monday left six Utahns injured — two of which remained in critical condition this morning.

The accident occurred on State Road 6 at 2:11 p.m. A vehicle driven by Stewart J. Poore, 31, West Jordan, was traveling east-bound when it went around a corner and collided head-on with a second vehicle traveling west-bound.

Poore was taken to Mountain

View Hospital in Payson and later transferred by Life Flight to the University of Utah Medical Center in Salt Lake City, where he is listed in critical condition and remains on a respirator.

Paula Poore, 27, West Jordan is listed in critical condition today at Mountain View suffering from severe trauma and a fractured mandible, according to a hospital spokesperson. Cathy Poore, 33, West Jordan, is listed in fair condition at Mountain View with lacerations and contusions.

Three others involved in the crash were treated and released from the Payson hospital — Linda Williams, 31, West Jordan; Larry D. Ford, 42, Payson; and Laura McIntyre, 16, Chester.

**ARRESTS** — Three adults and one juvenile were taken into custody early today by Utah County Sheriff's deputies following an alleged burglary at the Sundance ski

resort home of actor Robert Redford.

According to a Sheriff's office spokesperson, a caretaker at the estate witnessed suspects enter a cabana at 2 a.m. The witness tried to apprehend the suspects, who fled the scene, then the caretaker notified the authorities.

Deputies arrested the first suspect at 3 a.m., and learned three others involved in the incident were still in the area. The canine unit was called in and the others were taken into custody at 4:30 a.m.

The three adults were booked into the county jail. All suspects are from Pleasant Grove and Provo.

**BURGLARY** — A gold necklace and some loose coins — total value of \$330 — were stolen from a residence in the vicinity of 1800 N. 200 W., Provo.





# Kearns man drowns at Deer Creek

**DROWNING** — The body of a 20-year-old Kearns man who disappeared Saturday while swimming in Deer Creek Reservoir was recovered several hours later in less than 10 feet of water, the Wasatch County sheriff's office said.

The victim was identified as Michael Otto Dean, said Sheriff Edd Thacker.

Witnesses told investigators that Dean had been fishing from a boat near the Island Boat Camp Saturday when he dove into the water. "It appeared to his friends that he was swimming to shore, so they didn't pay that much attention," Thacker said.

Later, they became concerned and searched the shoreline without luck. They notified the sheriff's office at about 2:55 p.m., Thacker said.

A sheriff's search and rescue squad and a boat crew from the state park's service joined in the search. The body was recovered later that afternoon in about 50 feet from shore in water less than 10 feet deep, Thacker said.

The body was sent to the state medical examiner's office, he said.

• Quick action by a teen at the SCERA Swimming Pool averted a potential drowning.

Five-year-old Mark Allen of Brigham City was swimming at the pool on July 25 at 1 p.m. He was swimming with a flotation

device, but slipped out of it was found on the bottom of the pool by the teen, who pulled Allen to the top where he was revived by the lifeguard.

The boy was taken to the Utah Valley Regional Medical Center.

**PRELIMINARY HEARING** — A 47-year-old native of France is in the custody of Orem police today

## Police beat

as he awaits his preliminary hearing Thursday on four felony charges arising from a March, 1985, episode.

Police officers traveled to Kentucky last week to retrieve Luiz Carlos Ponteianna Pierre, who is serving a 10-year sentence in federal prison there.

Pierre faces one count of insufficient funds checks and three counts of theft by deception in 8th Circuit Court here.

According to Detective Clark Christensen, Pierre arrived in Utah County in 1985 and allegedly posed as a major airline pilot who wanted "to get out of the business." He claimed his wife had died in a hijacking incident and he and his then 15-year-old daughter wanted to settle in the area.

The bad check charge involves

"a slew of checks written at the University Mall," and the theft counts involve the suspect's dealings with a real estate agency, a title company and a bank.

The daughter faces no charges and is in Brazil, Christensen said.

Local charges were filed against Pierre in March, 1986, after he had been taken into custody by the U.S. Secret Service in Texas. "The federal process" caused the delay in bringing the suspect to Utah, the detective said.

Pierre is eligible for parole on the federal charges in 1989, Christensen said.

**ARREST** — A 26-year-old Provo man is in custody and faces burglary charges stemming from the disappearance of a generator from 8394 S. 2200 W., Benjamin. The generator was valued at \$423.

**THEFT** — Scaffolding valued at \$6,200 was stolen from the vicinity of 500 N. 600 E., Provo.

• A camera and accessories — valued at \$525 — were stolen from the vicinity of 5400 N. Canyon, Provo.

• An American flag was stolen from the Sundberg Mortuary, 495 S. State, Orem, on July 24.

**BURGLARY** — Cash and credit cards — valued at \$360 — were stolen from a residence in the vicinity of 1260 Oak Crest, Provo.

• Four rifles, two pistols, a shotgun, a computer and a CB

radio were stolen from a residence in the vicinity of 1500 S. 200 W., Provo. Total value of the items is estimated at \$1,000.

• A Persian rug valued at \$100 was stolen from a residence in the vicinity of 2600 N. 1000 E., Provo.

**AUTO BURGLARY** — Tools valued at \$1,000 were stolen from the back of a pickup parked in the vicinity of 900 N. 60 E., Orem.

• Stereo and speakers — valued at \$255 — were stolen from a vehicle parked in the vicinity of 800 N. 1900 W., Provo.

• Accessories and cassette tapes valued at \$220 were stolen from a vehicle parked in the vicinity of 500 N. 600 W., Provo.

• A stereo and speakers valued at \$450 were stolen from a vehicle parked in the vicinity of 1200 N. State, Provo. The vehicle also sustained \$175 damage to a window and the dashboard.

• A cassette player valued at \$200 was stolen from a vehicle parked in the vicinity of 900 N. 500 W., Provo.

• An equalizer and tennis rackets valued at \$440 were stolen from a vehicle parked in the vicinity of 900 N. 500 E., Provo.

• Clothing valued at \$100 was stolen from a vehicle parked in the vicinity of 1200 N. 700 W., Provo.

• A stereo valued at \$110 was stolen from a vehicle parked in the vicinity of 800 N. 100 W., Provo.



# Saturday Deer Creek Incident Claims Life Of Kearns Man

30 July 1987

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The victim, Michael Otto Dean, 20, had jumped off the back of a boat to swim, according to Wasatch County Sheriff Edd Thacker. "His friends in the boat dove around and, when they noticed he wasn't there, thought he had started for the shore. But they checked the shore, checked around, but

couldn't find him," he reported.

At that time, a little before 4 p.m., they notified the sheriff's office, Sheriff Thacker said.

Wasatch County Sheriff's Search and Rescue volunteers, State Park and sheriff's deputies searched until 6 p.m. before finding the body even though it was in shallow water, the sheriff said.

He said he is waiting for a report from the Utah Medical Examiner's office.



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